

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Currently Amended) The method of Claims 31 or 32, ~~further comprising the steps of~~ wherein one of the options presented at the UI comprises:
 - (a) displaying the list of friends to the user; and
 - (b) a step for enabling the user to select the friend playing the online game from the list before activating the ~~control that was~~ quick join option provided, so that the user is immediately connected to the instance of the online game in which the friend selected by the user is playing.
- 3 - 4 (Canceled)
5. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 32, wherein the friends list of the user is transferred from the gaming server~~ice~~ to a game console of the user when the user signs onto the gaming server~~ice~~.
6. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 5, wherein the online game that is loaded by the user into the game console of the user carries out the step of ~~providing the control~~ causing the game console to access the UI with the quick join option that can be selectively activated by the user to immediately couple the user in communication with an instance of the online game.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of Claims 31 or 32, wherein the step of ~~immediately connecting the user to the instance of the online game comprises the step of~~ enabling the user to select game options prior to joining in an online game comprises a step for opening a screen within the instance of the online game displaying options related to playing the online game.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of Claims 31 or 32, wherein the step of ~~immediately connecting the user to the instance of the online game comprises the step of~~ enabling the user to select game options prior to joining in an online game comprises a step for opening a screen within the instance of the online game so that the user is immediately playing the online game.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of Claims 31 or 32, wherein the ~~control for immediately connecting to an online game being played by a friend~~ quick join option is made selectively activatable by the user at a plurality of different times after the user signs onto a gaming server ~~ice~~ to play the online game.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~10~~2, wherein each friend in the list of friends of the user is indicated by a Gamertag that is unique to the friend.

12 - 30 (Canceled)

31. (New) In a computer gaming network that includes one or more gaming servers connectable through a network with a plurality of game consoles, a method of enabling a user of one of the game consoles to immediately join, at the user's option and without the user having to first access any particular gaming friend's online status, any of a plurality of the user's remote gaming friends in playing an online game, the method comprising steps for:

a user of one of the game consoles first logging online so as to access a gaming server in order to join in playing a selected game online;

the gaming server then causing a user interface to be displayed to the user at the user's gaming console, the user interface presenting a plurality of options for initiating or joining in an online game for the selected game, at least one of said options comprising a quick join option which, when selected by the user, in turn causes the gaming server to perform steps for:

automatically causing the gaming server to launch a search of a friends list previously created and stored for the user in order to find the first friend in that list who is online playing the selected game; and

thereafter, either i) enabling the user to select game options prior to joining in the online game, or ii) permitting the user to immediately join the first friend in playing the online game that is going on.

32. (New) In a computer gaming network that includes one or more gaming servers connectable through a network with a plurality of game consoles, a computer program product comprising a computer-readable storage medium containing computer-executable instructions for implementing within the gaming network a method of enabling a user of one of the game consoles to immediately join, at the user's option and without the user having to first access any particular gaming friend's online status, any of a plurality of the user's remote gaming friends in playing an online game, and wherein the method is comprised of steps for:

a user of one of the game consoles first logging online so as to access a gaming server in order to join in playing a selected game online;

the gaming server then causing a user interface to be displayed to the user at the user's gaming console, the user interface presenting a plurality of options for initiating or joining in an online game for the selected game, at least one of said options comprising a quick join option which, when selected by the user, in turn causes the gaming server to perform steps for:

automatically causing the gaming server to launch a search of a friends list previously created and stored for the user in order to find the first friend in that list who is online playing the selected game; and

thereafter, either i) enabling the user to select game options prior to joining in the online game, or ii) permitting the user to immediately join the first friend in playing the online game that is going on.